

L E T T E R

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

L—d TH—W.

L—d H—h C—r of E—d

cc. cc. cc.

Disce docendus adhuc quæ censet amicus : ut si
Cæcus iter monstrare velit ; tamen aspice, si quid
Et nos quod cures proprium fecisse, loquamur.

Hor. Ep. 17. Lib. 1. Ver. 2.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCCLXXX.

(A)

L E T T E R

To

L---d T-----W.

My Lord,

THE confidential servants of the Crown, in whose hands the administration of Government is placed, naturally become the objects of public attention; and in times of national calamity, those who are supposed to be endowed with superior abilities, are particularly called upon to exert those abilities, in order to remedy past, or prevent future misfortunes. Troublesome (however honourable) as this distinction may be to individuals, the public hath a right to make it; and your Lordship's colleagues in office, cannot, I presume, reasonably be offended; if, upon this ground, one of that public chooses to address your Lordship.

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Thus

Thus much I thought necessary to premise, in order to assign my reason for troubling your Lordship, in preference to any other of the King's Ministers, though, perhaps, I may be thought *premature* in my decision, considering the recent appointment (happily contrived to prevent jealousies) of a Scotch and Irish secretary of state, together with a new President of the Council, who, indeed, is English, and consequently, as far as the casual circumstance of birth can avail, possessed of one qualification at least in common with your Lordship.

I have, in short, my Lord, taken the liberty of addressing the following lines to You, tho' your Lordship may, perhaps, think them below your notice, and conceive they might with more propriety have been thrown by, amidst the other rubbish of the Cabinet, under the auspices of Lord G—— G——, or his Lordship's not unsuccessful competitor for public odium, the E—— of S——h.

Government, my Lord, in a country like ours, lies open to a thousand misrepresentations:—where each man has a right to comment upon it, freedom will now and then degenerate into licentiousness; and careless and unthinking people

people will impute those evils to Government itself, which ought only to be attributed to the bad administration of it. But great care should be taken to make a due distinction between the thing itself, and the management of it: the difference is essential: the most salutary medicine in the hands of ignorance, may prove as fatal as the most noxious poison: the best government, ill administered, may become destructive, and produce every mischief it was instituted to prevent.

How far this caution may be necessary, or in any degree applicable to the state and temper of the present times, must be left to your Lordship's better judgment to pronounce.

Convinced, however, as I am, that dissensions in the Cabinet *must necessarily produce* those evils I have just alluded to; and that a weak and pusillanimous ministry, still more enfeebled by the late secession, *throw a disgrace* upon Government itself—I call upon your Lordship to stand forth at this critical juncture, *to repair* the blunders of your colleagues; and, by a due exertion of that manly spirit you possess, to restore dignity to Government, and confidence in that Government to the nation at large.

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The epithets weak and pusillanimous, which I have applied to the ministry, may appear harsh. — Are they ill founded? Could any but an administration of that description, supported by great majorities in parliament, supposed to enjoy in the highest degree the confidence of their Sovereign, have reduced the empire to it's present melancholy (though, I trust, not desperate) situation? From such an administration alone, could repeated assistance have continually met with repeated disappointment.

Could any but such an administration, with the grant of repeated aids to the fullest extent of their demands, have had nothing in return to produce, year after year, but repeated apologies for repeated disappointments and miscarriages?

It is but a poor consolation, my Lord, to reflect, that those evils which now surround us, are to be attributed to this or that particular set of men; all naturally wish to throw the weight of censure off their own shoulders; and seem to think the justification of their own respective parties, an object of more momentous concern, than the well being, I had almost said, the very existence of the state.

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This complaint against parties, however just, is common to the very nature of them, and may be traced up to Satan, the first head of a party we read of; as indeed he was the first great personage whose dismission is recorded in history. From him and his followers, much of that spirit of party which has so long disgraced both sides of the question, seems to have been derived.

I shall trouble your Lordship no farther upon party in general, than by recalling to your remembrance one single sentence from Lord Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties, Letter I, "It is time that all who desire to be esteemed good men, and to procure the peace, the strength, and the glory of their country, by *the only means* by which they can be procured effectually, should join their efforts to heal our national divisions, and to change the narrow spirit of party into a diffusive spirit of public benevolence." I shall presume, however, so far to comment upon the noble author, as to interpret *the only means*, so as to imply the dismission of three of the present Ministers from their respective offices. This advice, my Lord, violent as it may appear, is founded upon the following motives:

First,

First, The absolute necessity for an essential change of men and measures in his Majesty's councils.

Secondly, The characters of these three Ministers, so far as they are connected with, or can influence their public capacity or conduct.

It is, I believe, universally allowed, that no prince ever mounted the throne with so fair a prospect of a glorious and happy reign, as his present Majesty did, when the government devolved upon him in the year 1760. A series of great and brilliant successes, during the war, in all quarters of the globe, had carried the nation to a degree of importance, unknown in the most brilliant periods of our history; and when the good old King was gathered from us, he laid down his venerable head, not fuller of years than honour. Conquest continued to follow the British arms; and, as something still was wanting to complete our triumph, Spain was induced by France to join her quarrel, and to contribute her share of trophies, to decorate the throne of the young British monarch.

In 1763, peace was signed between the contending powers. I shall not trouble your Lordship

ship with the merits or demerits of that treaty, but shall only observe, that when Peace did come, she appeared unaccompanied with those Blessings her almost constant attendants. Instead of Concord, Faction stalked foremost in her train, and scarce were our hostile exertions terminated, when internal divisions, domestic feuds, arose, and spread their baneful influence thro' every part of the Empire. Under these inauspicious appearances, amidst the threatening clouds which darkened almost every part of the political horizon, it still was sunshine over head; the quiet and dispassionate looked up to government, and called upon those in whose hands the administration of it was deposited, in order to dispel the growing tempest, and restore serenity to the troubled sky. How were these expectations answered? Every former idea of government seemed already obsolete, and no new plan appeared to be form'd in lieu of them; the only ground upon which the ministers seemed agreed to proceed, was to act in direct opposition to every measure of the late reign; and, as if surfeited with the repeated benefits arising from that system, to adopt a conduct as dissonant from it in it's nature, as it has since been found diametrically opposite to it in it's effects. In short, my lord, the history of the then administration might be easily

early mistaken for that of the present, and will alike afford to impartial posterity little more, either for amusement or instruction, than a kind of political chaos, a cabinet of shreds and patches; with this difference however, the deliberations of the former, were in a manner, confined to domestic matters; those of the latter have been directed to more extensive and more important objects: but, in the result, they perfectly agree; their consultations equally fatal to the country, have ended in nothing, but either useless, ill-timed exertion, or misjudged unsatisfactory relaxation of Authority.

The interval however, between these two administrations, should not be passed over without some notice. In the year 1765, an Administration was formed under the immediate auspices of a Prince of the blood, whose character, independent of his high birth, furnished the most reasonable hope, that every cause of complaint would be done away, and the King appear in the most splendid situation a King can appear in, enthroned in the hearts of his subjects. This agreeable prospect was still heightened by the situation of those who composed the then Administration: men of the first property in the kingdom, staunch friends to the reigning family,

family, and possessing *public* confidence ;—something however, still was wanting to give weight to their measures, or even permanency to their situation. Their Patron died in the October following—they may be said in a political sense, to have lingered on till the next summer, and then expired. The short duration of this administration, and the grounds upon which they did, and meant to have acted, will give it the air of a parenthesis in the history of the Reign.

An administration which was called Lord Chatham's, was the next in rotation; but, whether owing to the bad health of that great man, or to what cause I know not, it appears as if he had lent his name to them, and nothing else; it was not very long before he quitted them; and soon after, several of the members of the present, were insinuated into that administration: they soon overpowered the remaining few, whom, I may call original members, and boldly (perhaps rashly) set up for themselves.

The American war broke out ; how that war has been conducted ; what Alliances have been formed to counterbalance the hostile designs of our neighbours, now leagued with our revolted colonies ; what steps were taken to prevent the junction

junction of the combined fleet ; what leisure has been given to our European enemies, to arm and act against us—the public will, I hope, e'er long be informed of. If these are not sufficient to destroy the least confidence in our present ministry, I would call your Lordship's attention to Ireland—it is not the laying a few papers of imports and exports before the two houses, that will satisfy the Parliament, or the people of this country, in regard to the state of Ireland. No, ministers have shamefully neglected the mutual interests of both Kingdoms ; and will, I trust, be made to answer for it. It is not the paltry subterfuge of the Minister of this or that particular department, upon which the blame lies, saying, he acted with the consent of the rest of the cabinet, that is to satisfy public enquiry. The whole cabinet is responsible and if one individual screens himself behind his colleagues, the accusation must be general, in order to come at the truth.—If the measures of the King's servants have been such, as to justify the making the above enquiry, is it prudent or safe to pursue them farther? the dear bought experience of five melancholy years, is a sufficient answer to the question. Or can we entertain any well grounded hope, that those men, who have dictated, or at least adopted such measures, and
thereby

thereby brought us to the very brink of ruin, merit any longer the public confidence? A brief sketch of their respective characters will, I think, fully satisfy us in that particular.

The noble lord at present first C———r of the T———y and C———r of the E———r, from his situation, naturally presents himself the first to our consideration. Though his Lordship cannot, I think, lay any claim to the character of a great minister, he certainly is entitled to that of a good man; and viewed in a domestic light, it is not flattery to look upon him as equalled by few, excelled by none: and whether we consider him in the capacity of a Father, Son, Husband, or Friend, it would be detraction not to pronounce him an exemplary character. Few people can boast a greater share of that kind of pleasantry which sets the table in a roar, and serves to enliven conversation. Tho' certainly not to be reckoned among our first wits, he possesses an infinite fund of humour, which now and then, indeed, shews itself in improper places, and during the most important deliberations. He certainly is a most excellent companion, and tho' his sallies are always lively and sharp pointed, I never knew him accused of saying an ill natured thing. The qualities of his heart have
never

never been, I believe, called in question; and so long as good intentions, joined to probity and integrity, remain respectable among mankind, his Lordship never can want an Advocate.

Happy had it been for that noble Lord, fortunate for his country, had fate ordained him to have lived in less bustling times, or to have co-operated with some great and active minister. Under the direction of the late Earl of Chatham, when in the full vigour of his abilities, Lord N——h might have proved no despicable minister; but his Lordship never possessed that degree either of discernment or activity so essentially necessary for the situation he is placed in.

Indolence, my Lord, considered as a quality in individuals, may be passed over as *insipid*; in ministers it becomes criminal; they have the public welfare to answer for. Indolence in them may equally permit the most fatal, or prevent the most salutary measures from being carried into execution; and it is of little importance to the nation, whether a minister possesses the best or worst qualities, if his indolence is of so confirmed a nature, as to prevent the effect of either.

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That inactivity, the natural result of habitual indolence, has been the characteristic of L——d N——h's administration, is a truth too well known to your Lordship to need any arguments in support of it. And surely, my Lord, in times like these, when the most vigorous measures, resulting from manly and decisive councils, are absolutely necessary to enable us to struggle against the complicated mischief that surrounds us, indolence is guilt, and the public interest demands it should no longer be permitted to disgrace our councils. The nation has an undoubted right to expect essential service—an active line of conduct in those, to whom it's most important rights and interests are confided; and no private consideration ought to justify public neglect. The *motives* which induced Lewis XIV. to the dismissal of M. de Chaimellart are not inapplicable to our present subject—*La cause de la disgrace de M. de Chamellart, (says the Marshal de Berwick in his memoirs) venoit du dechainement * de tout le monde contre lui, de maniere*

* The general tenor of this passage appearing to the author's idea, so consonant to the present political situation of the noble Lord, it was thought improper to alter any expression in it, otherwise he would have substituted a less harsh expression in lieu of *dechainement*, which cannot with propriety be applied in the present instance, as the above character of his Lordship sufficiently evinces.

maniere que Le Roi, vu le bouleversement General des affaires, ne crut pas devoir le maintenir en place plus long temps, malgre l'amitie personnelle qu'il avoit pour lui. Il faut avouer qu'il étoit un bon homme qui avoit de tres bonnes intentions mais il avoit si peu de genie qu'il est etonnant comment le Roi avoit pu le choisir pour ministre ou du moins le garder si long temps au hazard du tort qui en revenoit journellement a ses affaires.

This description of the French minister in 1709, to my idea, corresponds so much with that of the English minister seventy years afterwards, that I could not help troubling your Lordship with a recital of it,

I shall now leave this noble Lord with this short farewell—I think his removal necessary for the public service : but however I may dislike the Minister, I cannot but esteem the Man.

The character of the first C——r of the A——y, so far as is necessary for the present purpose, may be comprized in a very small compass, it being in almost every one respect the direct contrary to L——d N——h's. It may be necessary, however, to mention one particular

ticular circumstance of this noble Lord, which we wish to attribute to his want of memory (no small defect, by the by, in a great political character) that is, his positively asserting facts in one session, which his Lordship as strenuously denies in another. This, with other similar circumstances, all, without doubt, arising from the same cause, have produced one disagreeable effect—an almost universal want of confidence in his L.—p's integrity. Were further particulars necessary, I would refer your Lordship to the whole fleet of England, but flatter myself no new argument is wanting to prove, that the removal of this minister is devoutly to be wished.

The S——y of S——e for the A——n D——t, presents the last, tho' by no means the least subject for discussion. The history of this Person would furnish matter to supply a volume, were it necessary, from the single consideration of a man crushed (as one should have thought) beneath a load of ignominy, daring to offer, or being suffered to intrude himself upon the nation in a great public character. Posterity will scarcely credit the fact; nay the recital almost staggers the faith of those who have been eye witnesses to it, and must to no inconsiderable degree have surprized the noble Lord himself, (I call

call him noble, for by *birth* he is so) if his memory retains the least trace of certain circumstances which happened at a very early period of the present reign. His Lordship will find it no small difficulty, be his abilities what they may, to account for his own promotion. If asked by himself, it was a proof of unprecedented weakness; if recommended by others, let them be answerable for it, if living; accursed be their memory, if now no more. In either case, it was a disgrace upon every soldier, every individual man of honour in the kingdom; a slur cast upon the sacred memory of the deceased Monarch, and an insult upon the Public. However notorious his Lordship's presumption or his ambition might be, those abilities which he has been supposed to possess, one should have thought might have produced a moderate share of common sense; this however does not appear to have been the case; for supposing him to have had the smallest portion of it, he must have remained contented with his late situation—affluent in his circumstances, he found himself beyond the reach of want: His behaviour at M——n, tho' from it's enormous criminality not to be forgot, was, though generally, yet humanely remembered. Had his Lordship remained quiet, the length of time which had elapsed, joined to the humanity, that envied characteristic, of the nation, would

would have permitted him to have lived the remainder of his days in a more tranquil, quiet state, than his unfortunate conduct could ever have allowed him to flatter himself with the hopes of experiencing. I must call him unfortunate, for to have merited public detestation must be the highest degree of misfortune.

The ministry who have received him their colleague, are surely in that respect culpable; so to a certain degree are all those who have supported a Ministry of which he was a member, whether in parliament or elsewhere. To this charge, my Lord, I, as an individual, plead guilty. No matter in what sphere of life I move—The only excuse I can make to my own conscience, is the reputation of the great political abilities I had heard ascribed to him—abilities, which considering the situation we were in, I thought might justify an appointment, which, in regard to every other consideration, I could not but abhor.

The fruits of his Lordship's councils will fully explain how far my expectations have been answered. I shall now, my Lord, beg leave to quit this disagreeable subject, with only observing, that this Lord is surely the most striking, if not the only example, of the same person

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having, at two such remote periods, and in such different lines, brought, or at least so amply contributed to bring, disgrace upon his Country. I believe, indeed, no other country would have suffered the experiment to have been tried a second time, by employing a person under similar disadvantages—at the former period he could not effect it further than personally to himself. Pray Heaven his efforts of the same sort, may not at the latter meet with a more general success!

Such, my Lord, are the characters of three of the leading Cabinet Ministers: and are these men of so peculiar a nature as to derive confidence from ill success, or to demand support in return for disappointment? They themselves cannot, I should think, reproach with any degree of justice, those who have hitherto supported them, and who now withdraw their support from them. Great numbers in both houses, who have hitherto voted with them, acted, I trust, upon fair and honourable principles. Parliament could no further be concerned than in judging of the practicability, expediency, or propriety of certain measures. The moment such measures obtained the sanction of parliamentary approbation, it became incumbent on the executive power

to carry them into execution. Every assistance the nation could bestow, ministers have received: not only heavy taxes have been patiently submitted to by the public, but individuals have contributed their private fortunes to an enormous amount. In a word, no Administration, I believe, ever received a greater degree of support, both from parliament and people, than the present have experienced; and, therefore, that Administration must incur the blame, of either having shamefully neglected, or grossly misapplied, those powers wherewith they were intrusted.

I know it has been, and I take for granted will be urged in favour of Ministers, that they have been continually thwarted in their plans by the artful machinations of opposition, not only by ill judged or seditious principles publicly avowed, but likewise by the secret practices of disappointed men. For argument sake, I will suppose this assertion to be proved, and upon that single ground shall bring a more serious charge than any I have yet proved against them.

I mean that of having, from an unpardonable degree of pusillanimity, suffered their personal opponents to counteract the most important plans

plans of Government. From their own timid connivance they become Partners in the guilt ; with this only difference, the criminality of the others may be supposed to spring from a source frequently productive of good as well as bad effects—I mean ambition ; while theirs can alone be derived from that most contemptible of causes, Timidity.

Were a stranger, who knew nothing of our country but it's language, to be introduced into our houses of Parliament during the course of the debate, he would imagine himself present at the pleading of a most extraordinary cause ; and from a sort of technical language common to all parties, would infer, that the Minority, and every individual out of doors, were Plaintiffs against the K——, and the majority Defendants. His conjecture would surely be excusable ; for while the *heat* of debate is suffered to carry people away from the immediate object of discussion, and to become little better than the *vehicle* of personal invective, the stranger cannot be expected to form any favourable ideas of either branch of our legislature in particular, or of our constitution in general.

To a want of caution in some of our first characters, I must attribute a fatal idea entertained by

by too many, of separate interests in the King and people. An idea, I am convinced, not less unconstitutional in it's principle, than dangerous in it's tendency. Their cause is one, their distress or prosperity is mutual; bound by the same laws, the preservation and observance of those laws is a duty equally incumbent on them both; and, from their effect alone, can the Sovereign, or the meanest subject in his dominions, derive security. The King's ministers are not only to be considered as servants of the Crown, but as servants of the People; consequently, their political character requires them to act consistently with that duty they owe the public; the executive part of government naturally falls to their lot; and, in the administration of it, if they suffer themselves to be intimidated by any man, or set of men, they betray their trust.

This plea, my Lord, (true or false, I know not) which they have brought against their opponents, being the only one I have heard urged by the friends of Administration, in excuse for their apparent want of conduct or ability, I thought merited some notice; and to their own advocates, I must ascribe the origin of my last charge against them.

I have now, my Lord, troubled your Lordship with those reasons which have convinced me that a change is requisite, and have pointed out to you those Ministers whose removal appears to me essentially necessary to the public welfare; I beg leave now to address myself more particularly to your Lordship, not only upon those grounds I mentioned in the beginning of my letter, but from motives of a still more personal nature,

The moment, my Lord, you were by your Sovereign intrusted with the custody of the Great Seal of England, your Lordship's acknowledged abilities, and manly conduct, both in your Professional and Senatorial capacity, joined to your new situation in the Cabinet, presented you to public view a great political character. Every individual, who wished well to Government, rejoiced at the appointment.

Unconnected with any party, either in doors or without, I can only answer for my own thoughts on the occasion—I conceived the most flattering hopes of public prosperity being restored, from the opinion I entertained of two of his Majesty's then Ministers; thinking them possessed

fessed of great political abilities, and of an active
 manly turn of mind—to them and to them only
 I looked up with confidence, (nor was I, I believe,
 single in my opinion—numbers, I am certain,
 entertained the same sentiments). From the efforts
 of these two Ministers, I expected Government
 would have derived importance, and indolence
 and indecision have been forced to give way to
 firmness and activity. The two ministers I allude
 to, were your Lordship and the late Lord Presi-
 dent. Judge then, my Lord, how all these hopes
 were blasted—when I found that noble Lord
 declare himself incapable of remaining longer of
 the Cabinet, consistently with *honour* to himself,
 or service to the public—and when I heard your
 Lordship, I believe not the very same day, but a
 very short time after, declare as publickly, That
 though from your office you must be considered
 as responsible for public measures, you did not
 take any part in the political business of the Ca-
 binet, but confined yourself solely to the line of
 your Profession—that moment, my Lord, was the
 last in which I entertained the smallest degree of
 confidence in his Majesty's Ministers—that de-
 claration of your Lordship, carried conviction
 in it, to almost all who heard it, of the absolute
 necessity of an essential change both of men and
 measures.

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The ingenious author of some letters lately published, addressed to the Earl of Carlisle, condemns the idea of any Retrospect : in this general assertion, I must beg leave to differ with him ; though great care should be observed in the conduct of it. No Retrospect proceeding from a peevish or vindictive spirit, can be beneficial ; but, on the contrary, a cool dispassionate revision of public management, becomes necessary, from every motive of policy and sound reasoning. Justice to those who are suspected of misconduct, would suggest the idea, if the public utility were out of the question. Ministers may have proceeded upon wrong grounds, though from the most laudable motives, They may have been deceived, and misrepresentation may have produced the most fatal effects—on the other hand, Ministers may either have been negligent, or criminal. At all events, a Retrospect will at least produce the good effect, of disclosing the hidden causes of our present unhappy situation ; and it will be some consolation to those, under whose Administration we are reduced to it, if they can prove themselves unfortunate only, not guilty.

The sole purpose of this Letter, (after having stated those reasons which have convinced me of
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the necessity of a change in administration) is to call upon your Lordship, in the most earnest, though respectful manner, to contribute that *weight of influence* which your station and abilities give you a right to *demand*, toward the great work of our political salvation. Your Lordship being the only person in the administration, whom every party seems to respect, it is from you alone we can hope for redress.

Your own penetration, joined to your acquaintance with many men of the greatest abilities, naturally render you a competent judge of the essential benefits, which must arise from the employing these men in the public service. The same talents, which, actuated by disappointed ambition, shake government to it's centre, might in a contrary situation, render it permanent, and give weight and efficacy to it's measures. It is a melancholy, but a no less certain fact, that at this moment of public difficulty, your Lordship excepted, the cabinet is as barren in point of abilities, as of property. In short, my Lord, it affords no ground for hope to it's Friends, nor for despondency to it's Enemies. Indecisive in the forming, irresolute in the execution of it's plans, it is become an object of general contempt: nor is there, I presume, a like-

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lihood of it's retrieving the smallest portion of it's former splendour, so long as those who now *disgrace* it, are suffered to continue there.

To remove from his Majesty's councils those Ministers, whose weakness or wickedness have tarnished the honour of his Crown, and whose measures have brought his dominions to their present melancholy situation; to remedy those evils which their Administration hath given rise to, and by adopting a new system to restore the national honour and public confidence, is the important task I wish to impose upon your Lordship. Arduous as it may appear, let us not deem it impracticable (for in that case we are no longer a people). Your Principles, my Lord, I have no doubt, incline you to the general prosperity: and when your Lordship considers the present situation of the country, you cannot, surely, refrain one moment from exerting those superior talents you possess, in order to complete the glorious work of Reformation.

F I N I S.

